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**Subject:** I think the settlement is wrong for America in the long haul...

Forget the fact that the United States is in a recession right now. I feel as though the Ashcroft Justice Department would have allowed Microsoft to win this historic battle from the get-go. I am a Republican, but I do not feel that this decision is what is best for the American, much less the world's, computer industry.

I don't think that anyone can deny that Microsoft has a monopoly of the PC marketplace. While not splitting Microsoft up in the short term is probably going to spare the NASDAQ a few months worth of pain, it will have long lasting repercussions for startup businesses to be able to compete in today's PC marketplace. What happened to Netscape will eventually happen to other competitors. Corel's WordPerfect is a perfect example. It was driven from the Windows marketplace because Microsoft had not only the ability to include trimmed down versions of Word (Wordpad), but they could market it for free with architectural ties to the Operating System.

The difference between companies that have distributions of Operating Systems like Linux, is that they are not trying to compete in more than one marketplace. You don't see RedHat with an office suite, for instance. They are content fighting it out with other OS manufacturers based on the merits of their product. Microsoft for years has been using a brilliant marketing campaign to make people believe that they have to have their OS, even at the expense of over hyping the product, or flat out lying about them.

It pains me to say this, but the DOJ under the Clinton administration was on the right track. Sever the ties between Microsoft's Windows division and their applications division. Allow them to bundle Internet Explorer with Microsoft Office, if they choose. But if other companies are going to have a fighting chance against Microsoft, they have to have the ability to compete.

Microsoft is too big. They control the destiny of all "little guy" startup companies around the world. A small company may make a superior product to something Microsoft could make, but as long as Microsoft is as big as it is, all it will have to do is make a comparable product and release it for free. It has the financial backing to take a money loss on a free product, if it will ensure that the other company goes bankrupt (Netscape).

I have been in this industry for a number of years, and it saddens me to see the lack of honest competition that there once was. The UNIX/LINUX world is the exception. These companies create free software that is portable, and they even play nice together. They come up with standards together (POSIX), develop languages together (JAVA), and have the same, although not just one, windowing environment (KDE, CDE, GNOME, etc.).

The DOJ needs to rethink this stance, because if they do, competition will flourish, which in turn will make the stock markets stimulated. If they don't, Microsoft will eventually be the one standard with the motto: "do it our way, or don't do it at all".